

# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION PILLS (ECPs)



## ***What are emergency contraception pills (ECPs)?***

ECPs are pills that are packaged just for emergency contraception (called Plan B), or other certain brands of daily birth control pills taken in special doses to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. ECPs are to be taken 3-5 days after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy.

## ***When can I use ECPs?***

If:

- You had sex when you didn't plan to
- You didn't use any birth control
- The condom broke or slipped
- You missed some of your pills
- You are overdue for your shot
- Your partner didn't pull out in time
- Your diaphragm or cervical cap slipped
- You miscalculated your fertile days
- You had sex against your will

## ***How do ECPs work?***

ECPs prevent pregnancy in the following ways:

They may:

- Keep the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man's sperm
- Cause changes to the cervical mucus making it more difficult

- for sperm to enter the uterus
- Keep a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus

**They will not work if you are already pregnant**

## ***How well do ECPs work?***

ECPs are not 100% effective. They work best the sooner you take them. If taken within 3-5 days after unprotected sex, they can prevent pregnancy about 75-89% of the time. ECPs are not intended to be used for ongoing birth control.

## ***Is there anyone who should not use ECPs?***

Most women do not have problems when they take ECPs. You should not take ECPs if:

- You are pregnant
- You have ever had a reaction to ECPs in the past

## ***Will I have any problems if I use ECPs?***

For most women, ECPs are a simple, safe way to lower the chances of getting pregnant after unprotected sex. Like most medications, some side effects can happen, although these are usually mild and last only a short time:

- Feeling sick to their stomach or vomiting
- Sore breasts

- Headaches
- Irregular bleeding or spotting

Eating food or drinking milk prior to the first dose can decrease the chance of getting sick to your stomach. Some women take anti-nausea medicine such as Dramamine II or Benadryl, one hour before the first dose, then repeat it according to the instructions on the label. This may make you feel tired, so don't drive or drink alcohol.

If you do not have a period when it is expected (usually within 3 weeks), you should get a pregnancy test.

## ***How do I take them?***

If you have been provided or prescribed Plan B pills, you may be instructed to take both pills at the same time, or the first dose as soon as possible, then the second dose 12 hours later. Follow the instructions of your healthcare provider.

If you are using other approved brands of birth control pills, use the table of pills listed below to see which ones are safe for emergency contraception and how to take them. Use only one type of pill for both doses and don't use the inactive or sugar pills.

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## Facts About Emergency Contraception Pills (ECPs)

Brand:	First Dose:	Second Dose (12 hours later)
Plan B	2 white pills	None
Alesse	5 pink pills	5 pink pills
Aviane	5 orange pills	5 orange pills
Cryselle	4 white pills	4 white pills
Enpresse	4 orange pills	4 orange pills
Jolessa	4 pink pills	4 pink pills
Lessina	5 pink pills	5 pink pills
Levlen	4 light-orange pills	4 light-orange pills
Levlite	5 pink pills	5 pink pills
Levora	4 white pills	4 white pills
Lo/Ovral	4 white pills	4 white pills
Low-Ogestrel	4 white pills	4 white pills
Lutera	5 white pills	5 white pills
Lybrel	6 yellow pills	6 yellow pills
Nordette	4 light-orange pills	4 light-orange pills
Ogestrel	2 white pills	2 white pills
Ovral	2 white pills	2 white pills
Portia	4 pink pills	4 pink pills
Quasense	4 white pills	4 white pills
Seasonale	4 pink pills	4 pink pills
Seasonique	4 light-blue-green pills	4 light-blue-green pills
Tri-Levlen	4 yellow pills	4 yellow pills
Triphasil	4 yellow pills	4 yellow pills
Trivora	4 pink pills	4 pink pills

Remember:

- Taking extra pills will not make the medicine work any better and may increase your chances of feeling sick to your stomach or vomiting.
- If you vomit within two hours of the first or second dose, you will need to repeat the dose.

### ***What if I want birth control after ECPs?***

You can start another method of birth control immediately after taking ECPs. Ask your provider about starting or continuing a routine birth control method.

### ***Can I breastfeed my baby if I use ECPs?***

If you have not started supplementing your baby with a bottle and have not had a menstrual period since delivery, you may not need ECPs. Talk with your healthcare provider.

Using ECPs will not affect breastfeeding.

### ***How will I know they worked?***

You should get your period. If you do not get your period when you normally expected it (usually within 3 weeks), you need to get a pregnancy test.

### ***Where can I get ECPs?***

You can get ECPs through your county health department, a family planning clinic or doctor's office. Women 17 years and older can get ECPs at the local pharmacy without a prescription.

## REMEMBER:

***ECPs are for Emergency use only***

***ECPs will not work if you are already pregnant.***

***ECPs are not for use as ongoing birth control. They are not as effective as regular birth control methods. If you are having sex, use a regular method of birth control such as the pill, patch, condoms, etc. Talk to your healthcare provider.***

***ECPs will not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. Use condoms to protect yourself.***

DOCTOR/CLINIC PHONE NUMBER:

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